

Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive held on 19 July 2022

+ Cllr Alan McClafferty (Chairman)

+ Cllr Sarah Jane Croke	* Cllr Rebecca Jennings-Evans
+ Cllr Colin Dougan	+ Cllr Adrian Page
+ Cllr Shaun Garrett	- Cllr Robin Perry

+ Present

- Apologies for absence presented

* In attendance virtually but did not vote

In Attendance: Cllr Graham Alleway, Cllr Peter Barnett, Cllr Rodney Bates, Cllr Cliff Betton, Cllr Tim FitzGerald, Cllr Sharon Galliford, Cllr Mark Gordon, Cllr Emma-Jane McGrath, Cllr Sashi Mylvaganam, Cllr Pat Tedder, Cllr Victoria Wheeler and Cllr Valerie White

18/E Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2022 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

19/E Questions by Members

The Leader responded to questions from Councillors Mark Gordon and Sashi Mylvaganam concerning the ownership of the North Court properties in the Atrium development and liability for addressing building safety issues. In response, it was advised that the Council was the freeholder and had provided some assistance, but was not responsible for addressing the identified building safety issues.

Councillors Victoria Wheeler and Emma-Jane McGrath asked questions regarding the proposals contained in the item on Gypsy & Travellers and Travelling Showpeople (minute 25/E refers) and their possible impact on future planning applications on Green Belt land.

20/E UK Shared Prosperity Fund

The Executive was informed that the Government had created a UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) to replace European Union funding, which was intended to support places to deliver against key national levelling up objectives.

Surrey Heath had been allocated £1m over the next 3 years and the payments expected in each year were noted. Any funding allocated to each financial year would need to be spent in year or returned to the Treasury. There was also a requirement to spend a minimum level of Capital each year.

In order to secure the funding, the Council was required to submit an Investment Plan to the Government by 1 August 2022 which outlined the broad themes and outcomes against which projects would be developed and delivered. The proposed timetable for seeking the Executive's approval for projects was noted.

The Executive was advised that guidance from the Department of Levelling Up and Housing required that the UKSPF was delivered with oversight from the Local Partnership Group and it was proposed to nominate Surrey Heath Partnership for this role.

RESOLVED that, to meet the national requirements of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund

- (i) the Surrey Heath Partnership be nominated as the oversight partnership for the fund including the co-opting of additional external partners as required to meet national requirements;**
- (ii) authority be delegated to the Head of Investment & Development in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development & Transformation to submit the required paperwork to Government by the 1 August 2022 deadline;**
- (iii) the projects delivered in year one (2022/2023) are projects which have already been approved and are in the Council's Annual Plan; and**
- (iv) an annual programme of projects be developed for the Fund in years two (2023/24) and three (2024/25) and be brought back to the Executive for approval.**

21/E Discretionary Energy Rebate Scheme

The Executive was reminded that, in February 2022, the Government had announced a package of support, known as the Energy Bills Rebate, to help households with rising energy bills. The scheme included a £150 rebate to all properties in council tax band A-D. In addition, a discretionary fund had been announced to support other financially vulnerable energy bill payers not covered by the main scheme. Surrey Heath had been allocated discretionary funding of £136,500 to support those suffering financial hardship as a result of the rising cost of living, but not eligible for the main energy rebate scheme.

Members were informed that councils could decide locally how best to use the funding to support those suffering financial hardship as a result of the rising cost of living. Members considered a proposed Discretionary Council Tax Energy Rebate Scheme 2022-23, which detailed how it was proposed to allocate this fund.

It was reported that any unallocated monies, as of 30 November 2022, would need to be returned to the Government. In order to ensure that a maximum amount of funding was distributed to the vulnerable in the borough, it was proposed to delegate authority to award the remaining balance of any unspent monies

RESOLVED that

- (i) the Discretionary Council Tax Energy Rebate Scheme, as set out at Annex A to the agenda report, be approved; and**

- (ii) authority be delegated to the Strategic Director for Finance & Customer Service in consultation with the Finance & Customer Service Portfolio Holder, to distribute any remaining funding to any specific identified vulnerable group as a credit to their Council Tax account by the end of November 2022.**

22/E Climate Change Action Plan - Update

The Executive considered a detailed report setting out the progress of the delivery of actions contained in the Climate Change Action Plan. It was suggested that this progress report should be published as an appendix to the Climate Change Action Plan, with the view to updating progress every 6 months and adding further detail as projects developed.

In addition to agreeing the actions identified in the report, it was agreed that the Climate Change Working Group should add measurable targets against each of the actions identified in the Action Plan. Following recognition that 75% of the Council's carbon footprint was generated from procured services, it was also agreed that the detail in Action O1 should be expanded to address this matter.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the changes, as outlined in the agenda report to Annex A - Climate Change Action Plan, be applied and the accessibility of the document be updated;**
- (ii) the Climate Change Action Plan Update table at Annex B to the agenda report be published on the Council's website as an Appendix to the Climate Change Action Plan by September 2022;**
- (iii) progress at Annex B be updated every 6 months;**
- (iv) the Climate Change Working Group be asked to update the Climate Change Action Plan to include delivery targets in order to measure progress; and**
- (v) the detail in Action O1 be expanded to cover specifics of procured services.**

23/E Corporate Peer Challenge

The Executive considered a request to ask the Local Government Association to conduct a Corporate Peer Challenge in early summer 2023. The timing of the Peer Challenge was intended to provide the new Council elected in May 2023 with insight in delivering its priorities over its four-year term.

It was suggested that the recommendations from the previous Corporate Peer Challenge conducted in 2014 should be reviewed in preparation for the forthcoming Peer Challenge.

RESOLVED that a request be made to the Local Government Association (LGA) for a Corporate Peer Challenge at Surrey Heath Borough Council to be conducted in the summer of 2023.

24/E End of Year Performance Report

The Executive received a report detailing the Council's performance in 2021/22. The feedback from the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee on the performance was also noted.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the End of Year performance report at Annex A to the agenda report be noted;**
- (ii) the End of Year outturns against the Council's performance indicators at Annex B the agenda report be noted; and**
- (iii) the comments and observations from the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee at Annex C to the agenda report be noted.**

25/E Draft Surrey Heath Local Plan Additional Site Allocations for Gypsy & Travellers and Travelling Showpeople: Preferred Options (2019 - 2038)

The Executive was reminded that the Council had consulted on a Regulation 18 Draft Surrey Heath Local Plan (2019 – 2038) between March and May 2022. At the time of the publication of the Draft Local Plan, the Council had been unable to identify sufficient sites to meet its identified needs for Gypsies and Travellers and had included only one site allocation for a Gypsy and Traveller site for 4 pitches at Diamond Ridge Woods. As a result, the Plan indicated that work to identify further sites to meet identified needs would continue across the remainder of the plan-making process and that a consultation focused on additional sites with potential to accommodate Gypsy and Traveller pitches and Travelling Showpeople plots would take place in summer 2022.

Work had been ongoing to identify potential sites to meet the Council's identified needs, as defined in the national statutory planning framework, and had resulted in the identification of three potential sites to be included in the additional Draft Local Plan Consultation as draft allocations. These sites were:

- Land south of Broadford, Chobham (13 – 15 pitches).
- Swift Lane (extension), Bagshot (5 pitches); and,
- Bonds Drive, Pennypot Lane Extension (5 - 9 plots for Travelling Showpeople)

Members considered the report and concerns were expressed about the suitability of the sites identified, including concerns about proposals for extending existing sites. Concerns were also raised about the potential impact on future ability to defend planning applications submitted on Green Belt land, as the identified sites were located within the Green Belt.

Members were reminded that failing to identify sufficient sites could lead to the Local Plan being declared unsound and consequently affect the Council's ability manage development in the borough.

The difficulties with identifying options for sites were acknowledged, as it was reliant on both the site meeting the necessary requirements, as well as obtaining the agreement of the private landowner, or the Council owning or purchasing the land.

It was emphasised that there was still need to identify sites in order to address future need. Furthermore, it was recognised that the sites identified in the report, once fully investigated, might not be brought forward following the consultation. It was therefore recognised that the Council would need to continue to seek alternative sites in parallel with the public consultation.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the Draft Local Plan Additional Site Allocations for Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople (Regulation 18), attached at Annex 1, and relevant supporting documents including the Interim Sustainability Appraisal Addendum, are agreed for a period of 6 weeks consultation from 8 August to 19 September 2022;**
- (ii) minor changes to the Draft Local Plan Additional Site Allocations for Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople (Regulation 18) and the content of the Updated Interim Sustainability Appraisal Addendum be agreed by the Head of Planning in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and People; and**
- (iii) Officers and Members continue to search for additional or alternative sites in order to fulfil the Council's requirement to have a sound Local Plan.**

26/E End of Year Finance report and Budget Carry Forwards

The Executive considered a report setting out the Council's revenue outturn for 2021/22. In line with Financial Regulations, the Executive was also asked to agree the carry forward of unspent budget from 2021/22 to 2022/23 totalling £283,489.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the spend against the approved revenue budget for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 be noted; and**
- (ii) the requests for carry forward of revenue budgets amounting to £283,489 from financial year 2021/22 to the financial year 2022/23 be approved.**

27/E Capital Outturn and Prudential Indicators for 2021/22

The Executive received a report detailing the capital outturn and Prudential Indicators for 2021/22. Actual capital expenditure during 2021/22 had been £4.490m. Members also noted the proposals for the re-profiling of budget and the expenditure of £35,000 on urgent Health & Safety works at Camberley Theatre.

RESOLVED that

- (i) actual capital expenditure for 2021/22 of £4.490 million against a budget of £14.024 million be noted;**
- (ii) the budget provision of £8.492 million be re-profiled from 2021/22 into 2022/23, as previously identified in the budget report in February to Council, and included in Annex A to the agenda report;**
- (iii) The additional re-profiling of £0.732 million further identified at year-end (31 March 2022) and included in Annex A to the agenda report be approved;**
- (iv) the additional expenditure of £35,000 for urgent health and safety remedial works at the Camberley Theatre and included in Annex A to the agenda report be approved and this is funded from a revenue contribution in 2021/22; this combined with items (ii) and (iii) totals £9.259 million to be re-profiled into 2022/23;**
- (v) the revised 2022/23 Capital Programme of £10.360 million comprising the £1.101 million of new budget agreed at the Council meeting in February 2022 plus £9.259 million of previously agreed budget re-profiled into 2022/23, be noted; and**
- (vi) the final capital prudential indicators for 2021/22 be noted.**

28/E Revenue Budget 2022/23 Monitoring Report - Quarter 1

The Executive considered a report presenting a high-level view as to the budget and financial performance for the first quarter of 2022/23.

Members noted a proposal to re-advertise the vacant Asset Manager post within the Investment & Development service with recruitment incentives attached to the base salary, following 3 unsuccessful attempts to recruit to this position. It was expected that the supplementary estimate requested to cover this additional expenditure would be funded by additional income from the service, and as such would be cost-neutral to the Council's net budgets.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the spend against the approved revenue budget for the period 1 April to 30 June 2022 and the end of year predicted forecast of full year outturn be noted;**

(ii) the request for up to £13,226 supplementary estimate (full year effect) to provide a recruitment incentive for the investment asset manager in the Investment and Development service be agreed; this will be offset by an increase in income and will therefore not impact the Council's overall balanced budget, nor require a drawdown from general fund balances.

29/E Urgent Action

The Executive noted Urgent Action undertaken under the Scheme of Delegation of Functions to Officer. The decision involved an agreement to lease a vacant retail unit in The Square to the NHS to establish a covid booster facility, along with associated car parking arrangements for volunteers.

RESOLVED to note the urgent action taken under the Scheme of Delegation of Functions to Officers.

30/E Exclusion of Press and Public

In accordance with Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, the press and public were excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the ground that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as set out below:

Minute	Paragraph(s)
29/E (part)	3
31/E	3

31/E Review of Exempt Items

The Executive reviewed the reports which had been considered at the meeting following the exclusion of members of the press and public, as it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information.

RESOLVED that the decision reported at minute 29/E be made public but any details concerning the contractual or financial elements of the decision to remain exempt for the present time.

Chairman